

# GUIDE

TO

## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

### DISINTERESTED OR PURE LOVE NECESSARILY THE SAME THING WITH HOLY LOVE.

By pure love we understand a love which is exempt from selfish influences. By holy love we mean a love which is conformed to rectitude or right. Accordingly the doctrine which we propose now to consider, is that pure love, or disinterested love, (which are forms of expression synonymous and convertible with each other,) is necessarily the same thing with holy love.

I. I suppose it will be generally admitted, that all sentient beings, or rather all beings that have affections, are formed to love something. Love is an attribute as essential to the affections, as perception is to the intellect. Holy love, which is the same thing as right love, or that love which accords with perfect rectitude, is characterized by being a *love which is precisely conformed to its object*. I believe that this is the distinguishing mark or characteristic of holy love, which is generally laid down by writers on subjects of this nature. It is very obviously a correct one. Right love and holy love *are* the same; and that love is right or holy, it will be remembered, which is precisely conformed to its object. And it cannot be right or holy on any other conditions.

II. And here we may properly lay down another principle. It is this. If all objects were correctly understood by us in their character and in their claims upon us, and if our affections were *free from all selfish bias*, our love would *necessarily* be appropriate to the object, and therefore holy. We can see no reason why it should be otherwise. The natural law of pure love is to conform itself to the object; in other words, to love that which is lovely, and to love it just in that degree in which it is lovely. This law is a part of

love's nature so long as it is pure; and it would not be pure love without it. From this law, so long as we form a correct intellectual perception of the object, there can be no deviation, except for an adequate reason. And it does not appear that any adequate reason can be given, except what may be found in the disturbing influence of selfishness. Take away the biases of self, and place the object of love distinctly before the principle or affection of love, and the movement of the affection towards its appropriate object is prompt and unerring. On the supposition, therefore, that we exercise love without selfishness, it follows that we exercise a love which is precisely conformed to its appropriate object, and is holy. And this is what we designed to show, viz., that pure love and holy love are the same thing. And we may add, that he who acts from a principle of holy love, is, obviously, just so far as he thus acts, a holy person.

III. But it will perhaps be asked here, May we not have, inwardly or subjectively, a love which is pure, without a full and correct perception of the object to which it relates; and may not the true relation between the love and its object be disturbed and vitiated by such imperfection in our judgments of things? Undoubtedly this may be the case. There can be no question, that this is one of the great evils which are incidental to our fallen situation. But there are one or two remarks to be made here, which are in some measure calculated to meet and relieve this perplexity. And one is, that pure love is not only pure in itself, but is eminently fitted to purify the judgment. It is very remarkable how the judgment rectifies its position, and with what almost unerring certainty it marches towards its object, under the direction of a heart which is uninfluenced by selfishness. In other words, the object is much more likely to present itself distinctly, and precisely as it is before the mind in the state of pure love, than it is to present itself before the mind with entire precision, when its affections are perverted and selfish. Another important consideration here is this. The promises of Scripture, which have relation to divine wisdom and guidance, are numerous and full. God giveth wisdom liberally, and upbraideth not. We have, therefore, every reason to think, if we seek it with suitable desires, and with hearts purified from selfishness, that we shall have all that wisdom which is necessary to give us a correct view of the moral character of the object before us. It is true that God may in some cases, and for *special* reasons, permit our judgments to remain in a state of perplexity. But it is unreasonable to suppose that he will do any thing of this kind to the disadvantage of holiness. All that he requires at such times is, that we should love the object just so far as it is presented to us, and just in the light in which it may be presented to us. And such love, however it may be perplexed in its operation by existing in connection with involuntary errors of judgment, he readily and fully accepts.

We come, therefore, in view of what has been said, to the general principle, which, in its practical applications, is exceedingly important, that, *if we love purely, we shall love rightly or holily.*



1. In view of this subject we proceed to make a few incidental remarks more or less closely connected with it. And the first is, that the doctrine in question is important, among other things, because it makes pure love not only a principle of action, but *a law of action*; that is to say, it is obviously, on this doctrine, not only the office of pure love to prompt us to action, but to prompt us to action in a proper manner. It can always be said of those who are the subjects of this love, that they have "the law written upon their hearts." And it is a law which has the advantage of combining, in a very considerable degree, the deliberation of thought with the certainty and rapidity of an instinct. It is true it acts in connection with conscience; but it is also true, that it first gives to conscience its clearness and its power, and thus comprehends in itself the source of light and direction, as well as the spring of action. And hence we may properly say, that, while there is no guidance so pure and exalted, there is none so certain as that of pure love. It is nothing more nor less in its results than unsullied and unchangeable rectitude, shining through the splendor of unsullied and unchangeable benevolence. So that those who are the subject of it, are not more lovely than upright, not more morally beautiful than morally true. And how can it be otherwise? God himself is their guide. "God is love, and they that dwell in love, dwell in God, and he in them."

2. A second remark which we have to make is this. It is obvious from what has been said, that those who love with pure love, will love God infinitely more than all other beings. If it is the great characteristic of pure love, as it obviously is of holy love, to love every object *in proportion to its intrinsic worth*, the love which they yield to God being in proportion to the greatness of his claims, will so exceedingly surpass all other forms and degrees of love, as to sink them into nothing in the comparison. Indeed, when they connect God, by means of his infinitely varied relations, with the things which he has made, they will love all things only as God is manifested through them. All that is naturally beautiful they will recognize as God's work; and in all that is morally beautiful, they will behold the reflection of God's holy image; and thus led and delighted by the evidences of the divine presence and glory, they will love all things in and for God alone.

3. There is another view of the subject, which, in some respects, is nearly the reverse of that which has just been given. God, according to the scriptural declaration, is LOVE. This implies, at least, that love is the great, the controlling principle of his nature. But it is pure love; that is to say, *love which is precisely conformed to its object*. And hence it is not only scripturally, but philosophically and necessarily true, that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice." God takes an interest, and from his very nature he *must* take an interest in whatever exists, whether high or low, rational or irrational. It is no more possible for God to see the smallest insect crushed and put to death without feeling an interest in it, than it would be for him to witness the fall and destruction of the highest angel without feeling an interest.

He sees with equal eye, as God of all,  
 "A hero perish, and a sparrow fall."

We do not say that He would feel the *same* interest; but he would feel, and could not do otherwise than feel, an interest *proportioned to the object*. This may be said to be the natural law of operation in pure love. Let no real Christian, therefore, however unworthy he may be, and however humble his station in life, indulge the thought, even for a moment, that he is overlooked; but rather be assured that God cares for him; and that he is dear, and must necessarily be so to the divine heart.

4. Another remark which we may properly make is this. Those who are the subjects of pure love are continually brought into harmony and union with God, in connection with his blessed providences. The providences of God are all facts and things, which take place under the government of God. In all such facts and things, whatever they may be, and whether for good or evil, God is always present, either effectively, or permissively. God is there, and those who meet him at all, must meet him there. And we meet him there by recognizing him there; and by recognizing him there in a proper temper of mind. And this pure love is always ready and delighted to do. Its greatest happiness is to harmonize with God thankfully and submissively, in all events whatever which manifest his will. On the contrary, whenever we seek for objects of love with which to satisfy ourselves, *out of the course of the divine providences*, we give evidence that our hearts are not in a state of thankfulness and of true submission to the divine mind; and that self is endeavoring to resume its influence. We are then seeking something besides God, which pure love never can do. And accordingly we become perplexed, and are beset with a multitude of evils and dangers. It is on this ground, therefore, that we say that those who are animated by the spirit of pure love, which has no choice of things founded on the influences of self, but always fastens to an object out of self, are continually brought into union and harmony with God through the medium of his providences. The providences of God, in this view of the subject, may even be said to be the food, the nourishment, on which the inward experience, whenever it is true experience, feeds itself and lives.

5. Again, those who are in the exercise of pure love, are not impatient, anxious and agitated; but are beautifully calm and peaceful. Agitation is one of the baleful fruits that are propagated from the life of self. The selfish man, who is necessarily an unholy man, is always more or less troubled. Divine tranquillity, more beautiful than those apples of silver which are mentioned in the Scriptures, grows from the life of God in the soul, which is the same as the life of pure love. Why should a soul be otherwise than tranquil, which seeks for nothing but what comes in the providence of God; and which, forgetful of self, has nothing to do but to love? It has an innate conviction, strong as the everlasting foundations, that, if there is a God above us, all is well, *all must be well*.

5. The existence of pure love in the heart, which is the same with that of holy love, renders the practice of holiness easy. "Love," says St. Augustine, "and do what you please." A practical maxim, which involves, when rightly understood, a great and precious truth. Pure love is a law of action,



which is infinitely more true and safe in its operation, than any other law of action without love. There is no need, in order to understand and apply it, of great knowledge and of laborious care. "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself;" and then go on thy way. The way in which God shall lead thee, may be over rocks and deserts, over mountains and oceans, amid things perilous to the sight and the touch; but still go on thy way rejoicing. Love, even in the natural life, and still more in the life of religion, makes all things easy.

7. We remark in the conclusion of this subject, that perfect love, in the sense in which the expression is employed by writers on evangelical holiness, is essentially the same thing with pure love. Perfect love, as it is understood by such writers to exist in truly holy persons in the present life, is a love which is free from selfishness, and which is conformed to its object, so far as a knowledge of its object is within our reach in our present fallen state. And accordingly it will be found to be an historical truth, which will be the more evident the more carefully the subject is examined, that the doctrine of perfect love, as advocated by Mr. Wesley, is the same, in all leading and important respects, with the doctrine of pure love, as advocated by Fenelon. And both are closely and essentially allied with the doctrine in religious experience, known among a number of denominations under the name of assurance of faith. This is an important fact. It shows that the doctrine of present sanctification has a true vitality. It is a strong evidence, that it is of divine, and not of human origin. Crush it in one denomination, and it will revive in another; extinguish it under one name, and it will spring into life under another. Drive it from our land, and it will find a home in another. It cannot die, because God's breath of everlasting life is in it.

X. Y.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

### TESTIMONY OF REV. H. B. B.

DEAR SISTER,—I have long and anxiously looked for a letter from you, but as yet have received none; I suppose your time has been taken up in a more profitable manner, and I have ventured to write first, in order to state to you my feelings while at New York, and since I returned to my circuit.

Previous to my visit to New York my mind was unsettled with regard to the great question, DO YOU LIVE A HOLY LIFE, and I can but refer to my visit to your house and Br. F—— with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret. Pleasure, because of

the instruction I received, which so materially assisted me in ascertaining my real situation ; and I conclude, upon a critical examination of my feelings previous to visiting you, that I was living in possession of the *essential elements* of holiness, but for want of explicit testimony upon the subject, I had lost the *witness* of the *Spirit*, and with it the comfortable assurance of my entire consecration. I regret, also, in referring to my visit, that I was not more open and frank. I am sure, sister P., you must have discovered a kind of diffidence about me which was far from being agreeable. This was partly natural, and arose partly from the conflicting state of my mind, for the enemy was assailing me with all his powers, seemingly. I was grasping by *naked faith* the *promises* of God, and the enemy would insinuate there was nothing *within* my grasp. This conflict, together with my natural diffidence, gave my conversation an air of strangeness which I could have wished had been otherwise. But however inexplicable my conversation and manner appeared, I left heavily laden with rich blessings — a new impulse in my religious experience — new determinations to live a holy life ; the consequences of which I believe will be glorious, and take hold on eternity. Since my return my faith has been that of the just, the light of which grows brighter and clearer ; and my soul has been entirely lost in God, and I have felt enshrouded in his living presence, while the mellowing light of the cross has fallen full upon my soul, and been continually transforming it into the image of Christ.

About four weeks since commenced with me a keen, severe, and protracted conflict, but after much prayer and self-examination, I feel I can shout “ Victory,” and my present determination is to endeavor to live a holy life, whether I find it a rapturous path or find it walking by faith aside from ecstasy, and serving God from principle. I discover one distinctive difference in my prayers now and formerly, (i. e.,) before I enjoyed holiness of heart, that whereas I once prayed for happiness, seemingly forgetting that happiness was a fruit of holiness, I now pray for holiness and purity, conscious that holiness and purity is the only true foundation of happiness. This difference I have discovered between those who are not interested on the subject of holiness, and those who are either struggling after it, or enjoy it.

Since I returned I have made explicit statements of my feelings, and have endeavored to recommend holiness in public and in private. Some two months since, on a stormy night, we were found in church, where for some time we had been praying for a revival, and trying to persuade sinners to embrace religion, when



Br. P. (preacher in charge) requested me to commence the exercises. The company was quite select. A band of Christ's followers, with smiling faces, and a few sinners, made up the group. The question arose, What shall be the *subject* this evening? The subject of holiness had not been presented as a distinct topic. I chose it for that evening, and immediately a rich train of thought passed through my mind, and God helped abundantly while I endeavored to show that the *will* of God was *clear*, in that he desired our sanctification; that the *will* of God is *reasonable*, and that *we* were *unreasonable* if we refused to comply with the will of God. Then followed a scene of great interest and power. Br. P. commenced pleading powerfully with God for the blessing; several of the brethren did the same, and finally we turned the meeting into a speaking-meeting, with a request to speak particularly on the subject of sanctification, and if any had experienced the blessing or were seeking it, they would testify of it. Br. P. testified, as did two or three others, that they felt God had wrought the work in their hearts, and others testified of their strong desire to be wholly the Lord's. Br. P. rode triumphantly in the chariot of perfect love for several days, was then powerfully tempted — yielded — lost the witness of the Spirit. But there is in his prayer a fervency and energy which declares it to be the undeviating purpose of his heart never to rest until God shall speak the second time, "Be clean." The rest of the brethren appear to move on in the enjoyment of this rich treasure, reading their "title clear to mansions in the skies." It is due to Br. P. to say that he was in possession of the principles of holiness before the event referred to in this letter, but was destitute of the witness. I hope *fully* to enlist him in this glorious enterprise, and I hope by an unflinching adherence to *the* truth, and an humble trust in God, and prayer for his assistance, we shall be of some service to the cause of holiness in this section of country.

With much pleasure and profit have I perused the favor from your hand — "Way of Holiness," &c. — and have now loaned it to my sister, who I trust is interested on this subject, and ardently desirous of entering the "narrow way."

I am almost afraid of wearying your patience with my long letter. I should be pleased to have some conversation with you, but as it is not probable I shall be indulged with this privilege very soon, if you can spend a few moments in writing me a letter, I should be very much pleased.

Your brother in Christ,

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## EVERY DAY EXPERIENCE.

(Continued.)

Oct. 26.—This has been a dark day—a day of trial. Hindered in my plans of doing good, I feel afflicted, and greatly fear I may have grieved the blessed Spirit by yielding to man more than to God. O I cannot bear to grieve the Spirit. Father, forgive me. My heart is thine and only thine, however much I may yield to man externally. There is a carefulness of spirit I feel, a watchful solicitude over all my conduct and feelings, which is sometimes painful, and perhaps unnecessary. Greater simplicity of spirit, and fuller dependence on God, would perhaps prevent this. When my plans of doing good are frustrated, and my way hedged up, then I begin to fear, and question whether I am doing all that God requires. Again, when circumstances are favorable, and I am called to action, then I fear still more lest I be lifted up with pride, and cease to feel my dependence on God. I believe I am really happy only when I lose sight of self entirely, and am fully absorbed in the contemplation of God. Out of self, away from self; in God and with God; thus and thus only am I blessed.

Dec. 9.—Am now enjoying for a number of weeks a season of leisure away from home; a freedom from care, which furnishes much time for reading, meditation and prayer; also, special opportunities of Christian communion and fellowship with God's people. Yet I ask myself, and with feeling, What are circumstances, however favorable, without God? They are as the wood and coals without fire; they are nothing.

“Were I in *heaven* without my God,  
’Twould be no joy to me.”

Yet may I not, do I not *expect* and *claim* a blessing here? Has it not been my prayer, “If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up thence.” And hath he not said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?” I cannot indulge a doubt but what my God will be with me here. My desire is unto Him, and *my confidence is in Him*, that He will be with me, and sanctify and bless to me this opportunity.

Dec. 25.—Christmas day. Memorable day! A time when God appeared, and permitted me to plead with him, as face to face; as a man with his friend. It was as when one of old plead and *prevailed*. Through the Spirit's power I had access to God, power to plead, and prevailing prayer: yea, my prayer was turned to praise. Surely, the Spirit maketh intercession in us, for things agreeable to God's will. The blessing I sought was on its way; it speedily came. Next to the sanctification of my own soul, no greater blessing could I have asked. And now, what thanks shall I render? I feel myself to be a weak, unworthy worm of the dust. I was never so dissatisfied



with myself as now; my praises seemed so small, so inadequate. I wanted an angel's harp, and angel lips. As the poor imprisoned bird against the wires, so I use my little strength, and then fall back disheartened, to be *nothing*; yea, *nothing* myself; absolutely *nothing*; and God *all*.

Jan. 1, 18—.—On this morning of the new year, I consecrate myself without reserve to the Lord God Almighty, to be his, soul body, and spirit. I look back to the period, nine months since, when the Holy Ghost was shed on me abundantly, and I realized that I was indeed sanctified to the Lord. And I have inquired solemnly, earnestly, with a sincere desire to know the truth, whether I have preserved myself *sacred to the Lord*; whether I am still *wholly* His, and living alone to glorify Him. One trying point especially has come up before my mind, viz., whether I have fulfilled that requisition of the apostle, "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye *eat* or *drink*, do all to the glory of God." A tender point, one on which I have often examined, and sometimes condemned myself. Upon strict examination of my feelings, it is a consolation to me this day to feel that I am ready, yea desirous to make any sacrifice in this respect which love to God requires.

Jan. 7.—Music, sweet music! not of earth, but from heaven; angel harps, blending harmoniously, softly, sweetly! Such music I heard in a dream, a vision of the night, and it carried my soul up to heaven. A happy feeling is in my soul; the sound thereof is in my ear as I review it. O to dwell for ever in such enchantments, where music is all around me, and every sound harmonious praise to God.

Jan. 10.—Enjoyed once more, and for the last time, another delightful interview with Christian friends. These interviews have been rich in blessings to my soul, for into these little companies Jesus himself has come. Yes, it is his presence that has made these interviews so blessed. As daylight to the eye, so is the presence of Jesus to the soul. I will endeavor always to bear in mind, distinctly, prominently, that I am to look alone to Him to refresh and comfort my soul, and no less in a social meeting or in an interview with friends, than when alone in my retirement. V. W.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

## AFFLICTIONS.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You desire to know my thoughts about the afflictions of the righteous—what we are to consider judgment for sin or peculiar sins, or chastenings for our profit. I am glad to see that you make a distinction, for we find, in God's dealing with us, there are some evils we bring upon ourselves,

yet in the order of God's providence. He hath said that judgment and justice are the habitation of his throne, but we often find Christians ignorant of this exercise of God's prerogative on the earth; and when afflictions come upon them, an unwillingness to seek if the cause is in themselves,—rather look to second causes, and in some cases fret against God.

I suppose you query whether souls in a state of sanctification suffer the retributive justice of God. Yes, I think they do; the sword was never to depart from the house of David, though he had genuine repentance, and was perfect before God. I remember a time, while visiting a precious servant of God, who often related to me his sweet experiences of the love of Jesus, and once said he would not exchange his lowly cot on which he reclined (and all that he possessed) for a throne. One of his personal sufferings I thought more trying and afflicting than all the rest. I asked him if he had never thought of exercising faith for its removal. No! he replied, that is a judgment from the Lord; (incurred while in sin;) I must bear it. I pressed him no further, but he related to me the whole sin which provoked this severe stroke. He endured it until the day of his death, and cheerfully, because he knew it was right.

We often see our friends under keen and sore trials, which they do not seem to understand why they suffer; but it is plain to us who are lookers on, connecting in our remembrance the actions these friends have meted out to others. We see that God is doing this in answer to sorrow they have caused. Here we find links in the evils of the world. He judgeth according to his knowledge of secret actions and purposes, and makes bare, by his retributive justice, the counsels of the wicked. What has passed an earthly court of justice, receives the scrutiny of superior equity, and if not right in the balances of the sanctuary, gains in many cases a fourfold retribution. For some sins the sword of justice never departs from a family, and when the last branch is laid in the grave, justice is only satisfied.

We see the hand of the Lord against some men in their business. They wonder why it is?—cannot account for it; perhaps the Lord is reckoning with them for some particular act or actions committed years ago, or present sensual indulgence. Some are suffering a peculiar chastening in their families for some wrong a long time done. Justice for wise reasons has been kept back, but is now exacting her strict demands.

For errors of the head and heart people suffer, though the trial may not be visible to others, because the evil was not ripened into acts.



The Bible is a plain rule, and we are not to bend it to our selfishness or sensuality, the two great leading strings to evil, which the enemy can as well bait and use to draw away sanctified souls, as those unestablished in the ways of God. Sensuality is a wonderful hardener of the heart, and an effectual blind to the perceptive faculties of the soul. When I hear a person witness to the crucifixion of the flesh, I look for the fruit, (salvation of souls through their instrumentality.) This you will always find the case where the vessel is possessed in sanctification and honor.

Here we may say, with the pious Taylor, Strive! strive to enter into the strait gate!

Yet in another way souls may bring upon themselves severe chastenings from the Lord, by drawing back from what they once committed to their Lord, or selling their consciences to another for what many call peace, and striving at the same time to maintain an unspotted state in the eyes of the world. This will not do. God deals with personal identity.

False joy is often possessed in a deceived state of mind, and it is a fit soil for many animal feelings, which are taken for spiritual exercises.

These evils, under a profession of holiness, bring the judgment of God in power.

It is true that the righteous are an afflicted people, and our God has told us that it must needs be that offences come, for in the world we shall have tribulation. But it is an easy and plain thing for us to understand if we are properly enlightened by the spirit of God in answer to earnest, searching prayer, whether the sorrow or privation is for our profit, that we may bring forth more fruit, or a rod that we have brought upon ourselves. When we are under trial for our growth in grace and further usefulness, we are enabled to bear it with cheerfulness; when the keenness of the feeling is past, also praise God for the painful pruning knife. Oftentimes when people are suffering righteous retribution, they are unwilling to understand the cause; a sort of gloom is cast over the mind, secret misgivings and uneasiness prevail, yet an unwillingness to see the evil. Sin is so subtle that it hides when sought, and nothing but the integrity of the Holy Spirit draws it out to be slain.

Wholesome chastening from the hand of the Lord, for our growth in grace, sustains the divine spring of the mind, and we are enabled to smile and rejoice; if our bread is scanty, we eat our morsel with cheerful thankfulness. I believe that our God will yet give us enough, and perhaps some to spare. The sweet

communion between Christ and the soul is not at all interrupted, though the tear of feeling dim the "uplifted eye." It is our Father's hand, we say, and the rod comforts us.

God has taught us in his word, from beginning to end, to expect measure for measure, both by precept and example. It is right to look for cause and effect in the spiritual world as well as in the natural. God deals with us in retributive justice, that we may be brought to our right minds, and repent. We are apt to think lightly of the sorrows and trials of others, but when the rod comes home upon ourselves, we learn to sympathize and feel; hardness of heart is peculiar to some constitutions, and a succession of prosperity increases it. The evil and dark day will come, and many learn sympathy too late to minister it to others. Jesus is a safe example of tenderness. Job was not afraid to search himself in his trials, and desired to find out if he had failed in his duty to the fatherless, widow, or oppressed. The searching influences of God's spirit never lessens our faith and confidence; rather increases the measure of holy boldness. When we receive anew the witness of God's Spirit, that the enemy hath no place in us, we again mount up as on wings of eagles, and our joy becomes full. Then let us not fear adversity or prosperity, if, through grace, we keep our consciences void of offence toward *God* and *man*.

Yours,

L. G.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

## HOLINESS.

### NO. 2.

How is the blessing of entire holiness to be secured? The answer to this question is important, though simple; and its simplicity has had a similar effect upon a great many minds, that Elisha's order had upon the haughty and leprous Naaman; yet I would fain persuade some to come to our all-healing Jordan — "wash and be clean."

There is caution to be observed in seeking this blessing. It must not be mistaken for something else; we should take up with nothing short of it. Doubtless a great many have professed holiness, who never attained it; and there are others, who have received it, but not accounted it as *the* blessing of entire holi-



ness. There are many ways in which the former may be deceived. The most frequent is, they live in a back-slidden state; not indeed without the form of religion, but really back-slidden in heart; and they have been restored to favor instantaneously, which has been taken for the blessing in question, when, in fact, it was nothing more nor less than a second pardon. They stand now clearly justified. They are happy, and, under the impulse of this happiness, come to the conclusion that God hath slain all their enemies, and they shall see war no more. But they are yet without the perfect fruits of the Spirit, and consequently soon give up all hope of living a holy life, and settle down into a fancied security, that all will be well before they die. This discourages others from seeking, and not unfrequently brings the doctrine itself into disrepute. Others have come to the conclusion that God has sanctified them on the account of some peculiar physical exercise, mistaking sympathetic emotions for the work of God; but they have also failed in the fruits of holy living, and thus have made the doctrine more disreputable than the former. Others have made profession of entire holiness, because in seasons of high excitement they have passed through strange and unaccountable exercises of mind, accompanied by unexplainable visions and emotions. These however are not the blessing. Others have mistaken deliverances from deep and dark trials and temptations for this blessing, yet the day of their rejoicing has been short. How careful should we be, therefore, in comparing our experience with the word of God through all its stages, that we be not deceived. Many have come into the enjoyment of the blessing, but yet, having either placed the standard too high, or not clearly apprehending its nature, have refused to acknowledge the great work of God. They have done so however at great peril. God will be honored in this work, and most certainly we cannot continue to ask God for what he has already given us, and we have refused to acknowledge, without grieving his tender Spirit, and betraying an inconsistency highly offensive to Him. Hence the question at the head of this article is certainly one which demands the serious attention of all. When the seeker has entered into the enjoyment of religion, however happy he may be, if he does his duty and remains faithful to the grace of God, he will not be long in discovering that there is yet remaining within him much that is unlike the Lord. Satan is always near at such times, to take advantage of the young disciple's awakening convictions for nearer communion with God, and deeper devotion to his service; suggesting the impossibility of his conversion, in view of what he now discovers within him.

He had verily thought that his enemies were all slain, and that strife and contention were past for ever. While endeavoring vigorously to press his way to heaven, he is startled with the discovery of the remains of the carnal mind within.

Sometimes he listens to the suggestion of the evil one, and yielding to the possibility of deception, he seems ready to give up in despair; but remembering that there is death in the city if he goes back, that it is death to remain where he is, and there can be but death to go forward; having no time to lose, he renews his journey to heaven with such energy of purpose and vigor of pursuit, that he breaks the "spell which bound him," and light so shines upon his heart that he becomes well informed as to Satan's devices, and puts him successfully to flight. His restless heart cries out for more. He feels that additional strength must be imparted to enable him to stand against the wiles of the enemy. He longs for complete deliverance. He mourns the presence of so much that is unlike the Lord, but still there is no condemnation. He stands clear in the witness of justification and regeneration, yet there is a conviction in his heart not of actual sin, but for holiness; not how he may become a child of God, but how he may become a *better* child of God; yea, a perfect and complete exemplar of his Father's and Savior's characters.

How shall such a soul secure its longing desire?

The Scriptures are our only infallible guide in solving all the problems of Christian experience. We can therefore appeal to them with confidence that we shall not be misled in our inquiries, or mistaken in our conclusions. They exhibit the attainment of holiness in two ways, both of which are necessary to its accomplishment, one being conditional of the other. They teach us, first, "To cleanse ourselves," "to make us a new heart and a new spirit," "to work out our own salvation," and "to perfect holiness in the fear of God." The Scriptures speak of this great work, secondly, as being accomplished wholly and solely by God. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27. 1 Thes. v. 23-24.) How shall this seeming inconsistency be harmonized and reconciled? The promise of experimental holiness is suspended upon a condition. The Bible is accustomed to represent that as doing a thing which only apprehends or lays hold of what is accomplished by another, and mere compliance with a condition is therefore represented as doing the thing itself. There is a work which every seeking soul is required to perform as conditional to the main work, and when this previous work is done, yea, in that same moment, God fulfils the sure promises of his word, and fills the spirit with the perfect enjoyment of his mature children. That conditional



work, in order to the experience of entire holiness, is the unserved, perpetual, and voluntary surrender of all we are and have to God, to be used for *His* glory, to be employed in *His* service, to suffer *His* will, and to accomplish *His* purposes. This presentation is to be made in faith, and with direct reference to the blood of the atonement. It is a sacrifice that must be laid on the Christian's altar, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sanctification of ourselves to God. It does not however work the mighty change we so much desire. "It is the altar that sanctifieth the gift." It is contact with it that accomplishes the great work. We feel the accomplishment of the work in that very moment when the vigorous exercise of faith brings the heart down from its pride, or up from its despair, upon the altar. The faith in which this is done must apprehend truly and clearly our present state, the abundant ability and willingness of God to make, through Christ, that state perfectly agreeable with his own most perfect nature and will, and the promise that he waiteth to do the work; and when done, to preserve us in its enjoyment. It is an active and energetic principle, that while it clearly discovers the disease and its available remedy, it lays hold of it with a grasp as tenacious as life itself. Look at Jacob, and see it exemplified. After a night of watchfulness and weary wrestling, nature shrank from the longer contest, and hope seemed ready to faint, but *faith* gathering fresh energy from the near approach of despair, throws a vigorous arm around the attendant messenger of the covenant, and cries, with the startling energy of one whose very existence depended upon its retentive hold, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." He conquers and lives. So let the seeker of holiness grasp the mighty "messenger of the covenant in whom he delights," so let him lay hold of the promises of him "whose blood cleanseth," and gathering fresh strength in the protraction of his efforts, let him seize hold of the "hem of his garment," if nothing more, and yield his hold only with his life, and he triumphs. The out gushing waters of salvation shall show him, most conclusively, that the key which unlocks the sacred fount has been touched, and his thirsty spirit drinks the cooling draught, and is satisfied. This faith speaks in sighs, in tears, in *groans*, until the Savior answers. How doth that mighty mandate *quiet* the troubled waters! How *hushed* is every noisy passion! How *still* is every boisterous feeling! How *gentle* is the heaving bosom! How *silent* is every envious thought! How *peaceful* and *sweet* is that calm repose of the spirit, wrapt in Jesus' love, and resting under the shadow of his wings! There let me dwell, my Savior, God, for ever!

G. W. STEARNS.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN HOLINESS.

THE first distinct impressions of the nature of entire sanctification, and the first clear convictions of the necessity of attaining to this excellent grace, which I remember, were received at the early age of fourteen, while passing through a course of study preparatory to college. It was then, that, after reading the memoirs of a holy woman, encouraged by her example, I went in secret to the heavenly altar, and in a place as humble as the cradle of my Redeemer, sought to bring my soul to the point of entire consecration. Of the success of that effort, at this distance of time, it is neither easy nor needful to judge; but the more painful impression is deep in my memory, of quickly breaking my vows of consecration, and taking back part of the sacrifice I had laid upon the altar. The fascinations of an alluring world, the press of studies quite foreign in their nature to holy living, but, above all, a temperament buoyant and vivacious to a fault, without those guards of personal piety found alone in an acquaintance with the world and a knowledge of one's self, soon sunk me, in religious life, to a point below, if possible, my ordinary level.

It was not till the fall of 1842 that these impressions and convictions were revived. While the first term of my senior year in our beloved University was drawing to a close, it pleased God to recall my attention, from a life hitherto comparatively irreligious, to the subject of personal holiness. While the rain drops of the Spirit, falling on the surrounding country, were heralding the advent of a revival year, and, as some supposed, the advent of the world's Redeemer, I was led to compare my spiritual stature with the rising standard of personal piety around me, and, above all, with the elevated standard of scripture—"the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." To facilitate the work of self-examination and spiritual progress, I availed myself of the aids found in Christian interview and communion. Long will it be before those sacred interviews will perish from my memory. The hours spent with a brother student, or with a select band of choice spirits, after the hours demanded by worldly science were yielded, consecrated in the stillness of the night to the noblest of all sciences, the science of holy living, can never be forgotten. Though the definite object of our search was not then attained, not the *one desire* answered, yet obstacles were surmounted,



objections were removed, and the light of Scripture and of our fathers was thrown forward on the path which was to conduct us to the interior of the spiritual kingdom, far through its portals of peace and forgiveness, to the palace of perfect love.

About this period of my progress, it was my privilege to hear our beloved President preach. He stood where he had not stood before for years, and where he had foreborne all hope of standing again. He came like one from the spirit world, where the soul had measured its responsibilities, and, in eloquence, overpowering the Christian hearer, seemed for a while to annihilate all personal claim to one's own self, one's influence and powers, exhibited the price which had bought up Christian hearts, and urged home the claims of universal love on the heart of the world. Every thing then appeared mean in my eye but consecration, and every degree of that seemed low and unworthy, which was not *entire*. The second service of the day was conducted by another. A discourse, excellent in its kind, held the attention of the congregation, but failed to interest one, for it was foreign to the subject which had been riveted in his heart — *entire consecration*. Under such influence my soul went upward. The communication between the suppliant and the throne was unobstructed, the distance between heaven and earth annihilated, and communication contracted to communion. The presence of divinity was then realized, not like a flood of bursting sunlight, not like an ocean of rolling glory, but like the circumambient air, surrounding, supporting, penetrating and pervading all. It was like heaven, where the pure Spirit takes its place among ranks of adoring seraphs before the throne, to whom God is "all in all." Then it was that all conviction and impression revived, and, with its full weight, inclined the ear of the understanding to one voice, inviting — "Come up higher." That was the moment, — the happy moment, reader, when all was lost in God? Ah, no! but the moment when the hand of faith fell palsied through unbelief, fearing to take the blessing; the moment, when, cowardlike, the unbelieving heart fled from the pervading presence, and was lost in the mist and cloudiness of its fears. The responsibility assumed in professing, and the difficulties imagined in retaining this blessing, made me for a moment distrust that supporting grace which accompanied every blessing, and the joy of my heart fled, and surrendered the heart it had inhabited to fear and trembling. In all this there was nothing unusual; such seasons of intimate communion Christians often enjoy; but in the *invitation* and its *impression*, when sub-

mitted to the verdict of judgment and cool reflection, I found enough to cover me with shame, and to convince me that I had lost, by not accepting, the long sought blessing; that, after contending for months, I had trembled in the moment of victory, and refused the proffered grace.

The year rolled on, the term closed, and sacrificing the opportunity which a long vacation presented for chosen studies, I consecrated the winter weeks to revival work, and offered the little aid I could supply to meet the great demand of that revival year. About four miles from our institution, in a little parish westerly of the city, stands an unpretending brick building, which, from its appearance and location, no stranger would mistake for any thing else than a Methodist church. Radiating from this little church, as a centre, lie a scattered population of our membership, whose location, by its proximity to the town, and by its retired seclusion of itself, combines all the advantages of a city and a country life. Since the foundation of the Wesleyan University, this has been a field, to some extent, under its cultivation; and the quiet people of the parish have been favored with every degree of pulpit talent, from the seraph powers of the sainted Fisk, to the humble attempts of the writer. Here many clerical students have first lifted their herald voices, and subsequently cultivated those talents which have since ornamented the church and blessed the world. The good people of M—— will ever live in the memory of those that have shared their hospitality, and around their names will cluster their earliest pulpit associations. Sacred are the associations which cluster around one at the present moment, and seem to follow the pen that traces these lines. Happy the remembrance of the winter of 1842.

When our vacation was over, and we were remanded to our studies, rest from the stirring scenes of revival gave room for reflection. Then it was, while taking a retrospect of the winter's labors, that I discovered a principle, to me hitherto unknown. It was this, that one might labor for the salvation of others to the neglect of his own soul. Let my brethren in the ministry, if they can endorse this sentiment from their own experience, engrave it on their hearts, and heed it in every revival. I was somewhat startled by the discovery, that during the winter I had made no advancement toward holiness, and had, indeed, quite waived, except in the formulas of public prayer, the subject of entire consecration. As a laboring husbandman, neglecting the apostolic injunction to be the first partaker of the fruits, I found



my garner almost emptied ; for, while pouring forth to others, I had neglected to water and replenish myself. As the results of this discovery, my convictions revived with double force.

One evening in the spring, meeting with a class of Christians about one mile from our institution, while indulging in the usual exhortation to believers, "Go on to perfection," I thought of the unregenerate pastor, who cries, "Ye must be born again," and the relation which he sustained to sinners seemed not very unlike the relation which I sustained to Christians ; his inconsistency seemed analogous to mine own. Every exhortation was answered back with the convicting reproof, "Physician, heal thyself." This, added to the rational probability that not one of my brethren would precede me in this matter, settled like conviction on my heart. From that moment I turned my exhortation upon myself, and resolved to sharpen the pointless dart of precept with sanctified example.

For the rest of my experience touching this matter, I would adduce a few pages of a religious journal kept at the time, in which were carefully minuted the successive steps of my progress.

"Feb. 17th and 18th.—Felt convicted of remains of sin in my heart, and deeply convinced of my need of holiness. Prayed for it, yet in vain ; and perhaps not entirely in vain, for prayer increased my confidence and quickened my expectation. Felt willing to give up all, and to do any thing to obtain the blessing : yes, longed to do some *great thing* — to *commit* myself thoroughly to the search. Could I obtain the blessing by going twenty miles, where I might join with people praying for it, gladly would I go. But O ! it is by FAITH, and not by *works* ; by GRACE, and not by *merits*. It is only to wash in the Jordan of Christ's blood, and be cleansed from the leprosy of sin.

"Evening of the 18th.—Attended class meeting at S—— H——. Went with strong desires for the blessing : nor were they *barren* desires ; for a strong degree of *expectation* accompanied them. In this they differed from all my previous desires. Class full, and full of spirit. The meeting progressed so joyfully, that in the spirit of the meeting, while participating the joy of others, I lost all thoughts of sanctification ; at least, I did not make it the definite object of search, and the subject of wrestling prayer, as I intended. In this I was disappointed, and, when called to speak at the close of the class, could not conceal my disappointment. Humbly acknowledged my need and desire of being perfected in love, and my expectation that the work would have been wrought that evening. 'Well,' replied the leader,

‘it is not too late yet.’ I cast my eye upon the clock—it was but eight; I took him at his word, fell on my knees and began to pray. I prayed sincerely with increasing faith and fervency. Feeling that matters were verging to a crisis, and that what was done must be accomplished that evening, I *prayed* till there was cause to *praise*. I got sight of the blessing, and felt willing to receive it by *faith*, and to receive it *now*. I crowded all that I was, or had, or was expecting to have, my interests for time and eternity, upon the altar, and, sprinkled with atoning merit, I felt that my little all was all that was required, and was accepted. The blessing was before me, and the time to take it had arrived. Here, where my confidence and spirit had before failed, and a spirit of trembling possessed, my faith sustained me. Feeling, as heretofore, that I was willing to be saved, I felt to go a little further, and exclaimed, I am ready! I am waiting! The fulness of the promise assured me that God was ever on the giving hand—willing, ready, waiting; this reduced it to the *present tense*. Here infinite benevolence met the suppliant, and ‘cut short the work in righteousness.’ The blessing was mine—I felt I possessed it; it made me contented. The witnessing Spirit supplanted my convictions, and I experienced a deep assurance that my prayer was answered, and the blessing bestowed. A mighty comfort pervaded my heart; a mighty peace rolled through my soul. Felt *conscious* that I had given all for Christ, and felt the witness of the Spirit, like an impression on my soul, that he had become ‘all in all’ to me. Then came a moment’s struggle. I had a vow to perform. I had promised God, if he would grant the desire of my heart, I would profess and make it known. A moment’s hesitation—the devil tempted—the flesh cautioned—it was but for a moment. Resolved to fulfill my promise, and perform my vows, I arose, felt like a young convert about to declare the mighty change. I said but little—my soul was full—it overflowed. All sentiments resolved themselves in *one*, and all expressions were but synonymes of *glory*! I sat down. Not a doubt lingered, not a cloud obscured. The *evidence* then streamed in like sunlight, or rather like ceaseless undulations of glory. I had often felt sufficiently free, in religious meetings, to respond amen! glory! but never before had I felt it like something that must be uttered. ’Twas no ecstatic flight, no height of rapture; but O! the depth! The fathomless depth! The ocean of love! ’Twas boundless billows of joy, and ceaseless swells of glory! I went home all melted down and subdued beneath this fresh manifestation of the love of my Heavenly Father.



"Sunday, Feb. 19th.—I arose, and reflected on last evening's scenes. It was dream-like. I inquired of myself, 'Is it so?' 'can it be?' For a moment I trembled; but promises of sustaining grace recurred to my mind and made me confiding; a thing quite unusual with me, for which I had never looked in my experience. They seemed like the oil of consolation poured on the sea of soul that had been ruffled by a little tempest. All was calm, or rather all was joy. Some parts of the day were peculiarly glorious. My cup was full to overflowing. A new world sprung up within me—a new creation sprung up around me. *Love was the supreme law of the heart.* I discovered new beauties in Scripture, and that all-comforting promise, 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,' especially, revealed a world of light and glory. My *reflections* gave me solid comfort. The scenes of the previous evening, instead of seeming *extravagant*, were heightened by holy meditation. I was glad for all I had done, and could not express my gratitude to God for his grace, which overcame my fears, and enabled me to publish his work. Thus passed the day in silent or shouting joy. I longed for evening to come, when I might preach a *full* salvation, and test it by my own experience. I sought a text that contained the word, or idea, salvation. Had a good time preaching, and wonderful freedom in prayer; joyful in the hope, that now that one stumbling block is removed, my brethren and sisters will press into the kingdom, nay into the palace of the kingdom—the palace of perfect love."

One week subsequent I find the following minute:—"The past has been the happiest week of my remembrance. My soul has been a sea of peace, unruffled but by waves of joy." And now, at the distance of nearly two years, setting to my seal that God is true, I can heartily subscribe all that I have transcribed as the truthfulness of God, tested in earnest experience.

In this blessed work of entire sanctification, I was but one among many happy subjects; and to awaken some of those dear brethren with whom I have taken sweet counsel in our college days, and rejoiced in the morning of their deliverance from legal bondage, and to call forth their testimonies, is not the least motive which has encouraged me to take the lead in this loving labor. The remembrance of what we rightly called "*the revival of holiness*," dear brethren, is fresh in our minds, and those midnight meetings where we covenanted, and wrestled, and prayed, and *prevailed*; and those meetings, too, where we listened to no less than a dozen bright burning testimonies of present full sal-

vation, will never be forgotten. The marked change in our deportment and intercourse as students, and the air of piety that then breathed through our halls, showed the genuineness of the spirit-work, while your hallowed zeal in preaching and exhortation communicated the flame to surrounding churches, till the like scenes were reacted among them, and entire sanctification became an object of definite search, attainment and enjoyment.

Should the above appear on your pages, a caution is necessary to the readers of the Guide. Let no dear Christian, searching for this priceless pearl, estimate its size or appearance by that exhibited in the experience of the writer. Let no dear saint, in full enjoyment of this blessing, cast away his confidence in a complete Savior for the same reason. Let each consider, in the work of the Spirit on the heart, how much is due to *the differences of natural temperament*, and to *one's manner of telling what many have experienced*. Let them also remember that our object is not fully attained till *love becomes our law, and obedience our life*. There is no sanctified saint on the footstool, who would not hail the approach of that time when all this *tempest of joy* shall subside in

"The sacred awe that dares not move,  
And all the silent heaven of love."

Yours in the service of a perfect Savior,  
Templeton, Aug. 20. J. T. PETTEE.

NOTE.—We are much obliged to Br. Pettee, as we are confident our readers will be. It will do all Christians good to read the experience, but we commend it especially to the attention of young ministers. They will find some suggestions worthy their consideration. ED.

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### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

[BR. KING,—I received an interesting letter a short time since from a respected sister, giving some account of her inward experience on the subject of sanctification. I take the liberty to send a short extract from it, hoping it will be of some benefit to some of your readers who are seeking holiness. P. L. U.]

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"I will try and tell you of God's gracious dealings with me.  
Four years since I obtained President Mahan's work on Perfec-



tion, and liked it so well I had it read to me three times, that I might more fully understand its *new doctrines*. The part relating to the prophecies especially attracted my attention. Since then, until last December, I have been in a very unsettled state of mind. Having an excellent pastor, and desirous of knowing how I could pray for sinners if I could not have faith to pray for myself, I went to him with the inquiry. He pointed to Christ, and told me how he had been exercised, and what would best promote an entire consecration to the service of the Lord. I embraced his views, and, *as far as I went*, found peace. The kind providence of my God carried my husband into Boston, where I went in February. Learning that Mr. Finney was there, we attended worship at Marlboro' Chapel. We were both delighted with a sermon on the union of Christ and the soul. I found that I had never been united to him, and every time afterward that I heard him preach, I found myself farther from the Lord. Such preaching was entirely new; it struck at the very root of my former hopes, and I knew not what to do. He spoke of our wills being conformed to the will of God. I went to meeting till I was tired. I then bought the work of Mr. Upham's on holiness, and sat me down in my boarding house to read Doddridge's Consecration. I had taken that, [the form of consecration by Dr. Doddridge,] before I left home; but concluded it was *too* strict for ordinary Christians to perform, and made use of part of it. I now felt that all of it was essential to be a consistent Christian. I could not adopt it. I then recollected hearing a good man say a perfectionist could not adopt the Lord's prayer. I thought I would see if *I* could. I arrived at the petition, '*thy will be done*,' and stopped. I could not say it, and I *would not*. There was a perfect rebellion against it, and although I knew that I should sink unless I could pray it sincerely, I felt just as a lady told me she did, 'I did not wish to be holy. I must reserve I could not tell what, but *something*.' Having the privilege of conversing with Mr. F., I called upon him several times, and listened with intense interest to his spiritual advice. After a powerful struggle, the Lord sweetly constrained me to yield my stubborn will. On returning home I enjoyed much of the presence of Christ for about a week, still feeling a vacancy unfilled in my soul. I could not fully believe in a state of sanctification. In looking over the work on holiness, (the Interior Life,) I caught the expression, or idea, that it was more difficult for some to believe they were *accepted*, than to give themselves to the Lord. *It met my case*. Immediately I tried to exercise simple faith in Jesus, but it was nearly two days before I could

fully believe his precious promises. I determined to fast and pray for his blessing, and in prayer he met me with such a rich, full, free salvation from sin, that slowly, softly, sweetly, I fell into his embrace, and we became one. You will understand me, I trust; I cannot describe my feelings better; and pardon my long detail of trials, for I hardly know how to be brief. I have had most glorious confiding communion with the Lord since. For weeks I was enraptured with displays of his grace. Many temptations have beset me, but out of them all the Lord has delivered me.

What a precious salvation, dear sister, has our blessed Savior granted us. Why, O why, has he permitted our eyes to see such light, and so many of his chosen ones are sitting in darkness? Do you not feel *now* as if you hardly knew the meaning of the expression '*precious*,' when applied to Christ in your former experience?"

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### I WOULD NOT ALWAYS LIVE.

[“ So that my soul chooseth strangling; and death rather than my life. I loath it; I would not live always; let me alone; for my days are vanity. What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him, and that thou shouldst set thy heart upon him?” Job vii. 15-17.]

I WOULD NOT ALWAYS LIVE. There's something here,  
 In this lone world of sorrow and of sin,  
 To which the purer heart, to virtue dear,  
 Finds no response, no sympathy within.  
 As when the rising sun dispels the cloud,  
 And spreads its glory o'er the dazzled sky,  
 So shall the mind cast off its moral shroud,  
 And bask in brightness, when it mounts on high.  
 That is its home; its high congenial place;  
 'Tis there, that, fitted with unearthly wings,  
 The spirit, running its eternal race,  
 And mounting ever up, triumphant sings.  
*I would not always live.* Hail glorious day,  
 Which gives us heavenly life, and takes our house of clay.

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Though others fail in their duty to us, yet we must not therefore neglect ours to them.